1:Indiana U. S-4, 5(1954-5)1955 RG4 Estonia RG4

Annex "A," Subparagraph 11,

Sociological Background

PUBLIC INFORMATION

203 All media of mass communication, the press, radio, theater, movies, are in the Estonian SSR under the complete control of the Communist Party. Dissemination of news by rumor is quite extensive, according to recent refugees. Some people manage to listen to the forbidden Voice of America, Radio Free Europe, Estonian broadcasts in Munich and other programs and tell the news of the Western world to their friends. However, by doing so, they run the risk of deportation. (Many refugees have told that they listened frequently to these broadcasts.)

204 G26 Foreign newspapers, magazines and radio broadcasts are not officially permitted. Foreign films are censored if they are shown at all. All

Annex "A," Subparagraph 11,

Sociological Background

PUBLIC INFORMATION

• 203 The principal means for disseminating news among the Vepsians is by rumor, and this is done especially by women. The women and girls spin and do their needlework together. Spindles under their arms, they go from one house to another carrying news all over the village, in this way replacing the mailman. Their main interest is with the current happenings in the village, such as deaths, births, courtships, etc.

Kettunen gives the following example of the functioning of the "village mail" (p. 54): "For instance, a soldier arrives home from a 3-year unbroken service, and his wife has just given birth to a child. The woman who first hears of this, sets aside her spindle immediately and goes to the village, so that nobody else luckier than her has the chance to spread the news. Then the people in the village will follow each change in the relationship of this couple with the greatest excitement. 'He beat his wife with a leather belt,' somebody suddenly hears, and in five minutes the whole village repeats: 'He beat her with a leather belt.' Usually they whisper behind the back of the people involved, but there always is in the village some simple one who makes the results

203 of the general criticism known to the one concerned."

204 From one village the news spreads to the others, and so the rumors completely replace the newspaper. There was hardly any newspaper read in the South Vepsian area in 1917-1918. Kettunen tells of the excitement in Arskaht village when his own newspaper was due; not only were the men of the village anxious to see the only newspaper in their village but they were eager to use it for cigarette paper.

113 SOURCE

Kettunen, Lauri
1918. Matkamuistelmia Vepsän perukoilta. /Memoirs of a Journey in the Vepsian Hinterland./ Virittäjä, pp. 43, 45, 54.